

THE Princess Virginia

By C. N. and A. M. WILLIAMSON,
Authors of "The Lightning Conductor," "Rose-
mary in Search of a Father," Etc.

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Through the gate of dreams lies the fair land of romance into which you would travel, finding welcome relief from the daily grind. Now you are invited to accompany the Princess Virginia, who determines that the royal personage who would honor her with his hand must fall in love with her and woo her as any other man would a woman. Therefore she travels incognito in his realm, meeting adventures strange and full of excitement. You will learn with pardonable pride that the American blood in her veins gives her an independence unheard of in the presence of kings, but most of all you will want to know how she succeeds in her bold undertaking. That you will enjoy every minute of the reading is assured by the verdict of thousands who declare "The Princess Virginia" to be a most delightful story.

CHAPTER ONE

"O," said the princess, "no, I'm dashed if I do."
"My darling child," exclaimed the grand duchess, "you're impossible. If any one should hear you!"
"It's he who's impossible," the princess amended. "I'm just trying to show you."
"Or to shock me. You are so like your grandmother."
"That's the best compliment any one can give me, which is lucky, as it's given so often," laughed the princess.
"Dear, adorable Virginia!" She cuddled into the pink hollow of her hand the pearl framed ivory miniature of a beautiful, smiling girl which always hung from a thin gold chain around her neck. "They shouldn't have named me after you, should they, if they hadn't wanted me to be like you?"
"It was partly a question of money, dear," sighed the grand duchess. "If my mother hadn't left a legacy to my first daughter only on consideration that her own extremely American name of Virginia should be perpetuated."
"It was a delicious way of being patriotic. I'm glad she did it. I love being the only royal princess with American blood in my veins and an American name on my handkerchiefs. Do you believe for an instant that if Grandmother Virginia were alive she would let Granddaughter Virginia marry Prince Henri de Touraine?"
"I don't see why not," said the grand duchess. "She wasn't too patriotic to marry an English duke and startle London as the first American duchess. Heavens, the things she used to do if one could believe half the wild stories my father's sister told me in warning! And as for my father, though a most charming man, of course he could not—er—have been called precisely estimable, while Prince Henri certainly is, and an exceedingly good match even for you—in present circumstances."
"Call him a match if you like, mother. He's undoubtedly a stick. But, no; he's not a match for me. There's only one on earth." And Virginia's eyes were lifted to the sky as if, instead of existing on earth, the person in her thoughts were placed as high as the sun that shone above her.
"I should have preferred an Englishman for you," said the grand duchess, "if only there were one of suitable rank free to—"
"I'm not thinking of an Englishman," murmured her daughter.
"If only you would think of poor Henri!"
"Never of him. You know, I said I would be dash!"
"Don't repeat it! Oh, when you look at me in that way, how like you are to your grandmother's portrait at home—the one in white, painted just before her marriage! One might have known you would be extraordinary. That sort of thing invariably skips over a generation."
The grand duchess laid down the theory as a law, and whether or no she were right, it was at least sure that she had inherited nothing of the first Virginia's daring originality—some of her radiant mother's beauty perhaps, watered down to gentle prettiness, for the hereditary Grand Duchess of Baumburg-Drippe at fifty-one was still a daintily attractive woman, a middle-aged Dresden china lady, with a perfect complexion preserved by an almost perfect temper, surprised eyebrows, kindly dimples and a conventional upper lip.
She was not by birth "hereditary." Her lord and (very much) her master had been that and had selected her to help him reign over the hereditary grand duchy of Baumburg-Drippe, not only because her father was an English duke with royal Stuart

in his veins, but because her Virginia mother had brought much gold to the Northmoreland exchequer. Afterward he had freely spent such portion of that gold as had come to his coffers in trying to keep his little estates intact. But now it was all gone, and long ago he had died of grief and bitter disappointment. The hereditary grand duchy of Baumburg-Drippe was ruled by a cousinly understanding of the German Emperor William II.; the one son of the marriage had been adopted as heir to his crown by the childless king of Hungary; the handsome and lamentably extravagant old Duke of Northmoreland was dead; his title and vast estates had passed to a distant and disagreeable relative, and the widowed grand duchess, with her one fair daughter, had lived for years in a pretty old house with a high walled garden at Hampton Court, lent by the generosity of the king and queen of England.

For a long moment the Dresden china lady thought in silence and something of sadness. Then she roused herself again and asked the one and only royal princess with an American name what, in the way of a match, she really expected.

"What do I expect?" echoed Virginia. "Why, I wish for the moon—no, I mean the sun. But I don't expect to get it."

"Is that a way of saying you never intend to marry?"

"I'm afraid it amounts to that," admitted Virginia, "since there is only one man in the world I would have for my husband."

"My dearest! A man you have let yourself learn to care for, a man beneath you? How terrible! But you see no one. I—"

"I've never seen this man. And—I'm not in love with him. That would be too foolish, because, instead of being beneath, he's far, far above me."

"Virginia, of whom can you be talking? Or is this another joke?"

Virginia blushed a little and, instead of answering her mother's look of helpless appeal, stared at the row of tall hollyhocks that blazed along the ivy hidden garden wall. She did not speak for an instant, and then she said, with the dainty shyness of a child pinned to a statement by uncomprehending elders: "It isn't a joke. Nonsense, maybe, yet not a joke. I've always thought of him—for so many years I've forgotten when it first began. He was so great, so everything that appeals to me. How could I help thinking about him and putting him on a pedestal? I—there's no idea of marriage in my mind, of course, only—there's no other man possible after all the thoughts I've given him—no other man in the world."

"My dear, you must tell me his name."

"What! When I've described him—almost—do you still need to hear his name? Well, then, I—I'm not ashamed to tell. It's Leopold."

"Leopold. You're talking of the emperor of Rhaetia."

"As if it could have been any one else."

"And you have thought of him, you've cherished him, for years as an ideal? Why, you never spoke of him particularly before."

"That's because you never seriously wanted me to take a husband until this prim, dull French Henri proposed himself. My thoughts were my own. I wouldn't have told you only—you see why."

"Of course, my precious child. How extremely interesting and—er—romantic! Again the grand duchess lapsed into silence, yet her expression did not suggest a stricken mind. She merely appeared astonished, with an astonishment that might turn into an emotion more agreeable.

Meanwhile it was left for Virginia to look vexed—vexed with herself. She wished that she had not betrayed her poor little foolish secret—so shadowy a secret that it was hardly worthy of the name. Yet it had been precious—precious since childhood, precious as the immediate jewel of her soul because it had been the jewel of her soul, and no one else had dreamed of its existence. Now she had shown it to other eyes, almost flaunted it. Never again could it be a joy to her.

In the little room, half study, half boudoir, which was her own there was a desk, locked in her absence, where souvenirs of the young emperor of Rhaetia had been accumulating for years. There were photographs which Virginia had contrived to buy secretly—portraits of Leopold from an early age up to the present, when he was shown as a tall, dark, cold eyed, warm blooded, firm chinned young man of thirty. There were paragraphs cut from newspapers telling of his genius as a soldier, his prowess as a mountaineer and hunter of big game, with dramatic anecdotes of his haughty courage in time of danger, his impulsive charities, his well thought out schemes for the welfare of his subjects in every walk of life.

There were black and white copies of bold, clever pictures he had painted. There was martial music composed by him and plaintive folk songs adapted by him, which Virginia had tried vainly to hum on her little piano when

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It was nearly noon. There were reports of speeches made by him since his accession to the throne, accounts of improvements in guns and an invention of a new explosive. There was a somewhat crude yet witty play which he had written and numerous other records of the accomplishments and achievements and even eccentricities which had built up the Princess Virginia's ideal of this celebrated young man, proclaimed emperor after the great revolution eight years ago.

"You are worthy to be an empress," her mother's voice broke into Virginia's thoughts. She started and found herself under inspection by the grand duchess. At first she frowned; then she laughed, springing up on a quick impulse to turn earnest into jest and so perhaps escape further embarrassing.

"Yes, would I not make an empress?" she echoed, stepping out from the shadow of her favorite elm into the moonlight radiance of summer.

The sun poured over her hair as she stood with uplifted head and threaded it with a network of living gold, gleaming into the dark eyes rimmed with black lashes and turning them to jewels. Her fair skin was as flawless in the unsparring light as the petals of lilies, and her features, though a repetition of those which had made a Virginia girl famous long ago, were carved with royal perfection.

"There is no real reason why you should not make an empress, dearest," said her mother, in pride of the girl's beauty and desiring, womanlike, to promote her child's happiness. "Strange things have happened. Only last week at Windsor the dear queen was saying what a pity poor Henri was not more. But, no matter; he is well enough. However, if—"

And when one comes to think of it, it's perhaps not unnatural that Leopold of Rhaetia has never been mentioned for you, although there could be nothing against the marriage. What a match for any woman—a supreme one! Not a royal girl but would go on her knees to him!"

"I wouldn't," said Virginia. "I might worship him, yet he should go on his knees to me."

"I doubt if those proud knees of his will ever bend in homage to man or woman," replied the grand duchess. "But that's a mere fantasy. I'm serious now, darling, and I very much wish you would be."

"Please, I'd rather not," smiled Virginia uneasily. "Let us not talk of the emperor any more—and never again after this, mother. You know now. That's all that's necessary, and—"

"But it's not all that's necessary. You have put the idea into my head, and it's not an unpleasant idea. Besides, it has evidently been in your head for a long time, and I should like to see you happy—see you in a position such as you're entitled to grace. You are a very beautiful girl (there's no disguising that from you, as you know you are the image of your grandmother, who was a celebrated beauty), and the best blood in Europe runs in your veins. You are royal, and yet—and yet our circumstances are such that—in fact, for the present we're somewhat handicapped."

"We're beggars," said Virginia, laughing, but it was not a happy laugh.

"Cophetua married the beggar maid," the grand duchess reminded her, with elaborate playfulness. "And, you

know, all sorts of things have happened in history—much stranger than any one would dare put in fiction if writing of royalties. My dear husband was second cousin once removed to the German emperor, though he was treated— But we mustn't speak of that. The subject always upsets me. What I was leading up to is this—though there may be other girls who from a worldly



"Yes, would I not make an empress?" point of view are more desirable, still you're strictly within the pale from which Leopold is entitled to choose his wife, and if—"

"Dear little mother, there's no such 'if' and, as for me, I wasn't thinking of a 'worldly point of view.' The emperor of Rhaetia barely knows that I exist. And even if by some miracle he should suddenly discover that little Princess Virginia Mary Victoria Alexandra Hildegrade of Baumburg-Drippe was the one suitable wife for him on earth I wouldn't have him want me because I was suitable; but—because I was irresistible. I'd want his love—all his love—or I would say: 'No, you must look somewhere else for your empress.'"

"But that's nonsense, darling. Royal people seldom or never have the chance to fall in love," said the grand duchess.

"I'm tired of being royal," snapped the princess. "Being royal does nothing but spoil all one's fun and oblige one to do stupid, boring things which one hates."

"Nevertheless noblesse does oblige," went on the Dresden china prophetic of conventionality. "When alliances are arranged for women of our position, we must content ourselves with the hope that love may come after marriage, or if not, we must go on doing our duty in that state of life to which heaven has graciously called us."

"Bother duty!" broke out Virginia. "Thank goodness. In these days not all the king's horses and all the king's men can make even a princess marry against her will. I hate that everlasting cant about 'duty in marriage.' When people love each other they're kind and good and sweet and true because it's a joy, not because it's a duty. And that's the only sort of loyalty worth having between men and women, according to me. I wouldn't accept anything else from a man, and I should despise him if he were less or more exacting."

"Virginia, the way you express yourself is almost improper. I'm thankful that no one hears you except myself," said the grand duchess. But at this moment, when clash of tongues and opinions seemed imminent, there occurred a happy diversion in the arrival of letters.

Virginia, who was a neglectful correspondent had nothing, but two or three important looking envelopes claimed attention from the grand duchess, and as soon as the ladies were once more alone together in the sweet scented garden she broke the crown stamped seal of her son Adalbert, now by adoption crown prince of Hungary.

"Open the others for me, dear," she demanded excitedly, "while I see what Dai has to say." And Virginia leisurely obeyed, wondering whether Dai's news would be and by be passed on to her. It was always an event when a long letter came from him, and the grand duchess invariably laughed and exclaimed and sometimes blushed as she read, but when she blushed the letter was not given to the crown prince's sister.

There was a note today from an old friend of her mother's of whom Virginia was fond, and she had just begun to be interested in the third paragraph, all about an adorable laudy Dimont puppy, when an odd half stifled exclamation from the grand duchess made the girl lift her eyes.

"Has Dai been having something beyond the common in the way of adventures?" she inquired dryly.

Her mother did not answer, but she had grown pink and then pale.

Virginia began to be uneasy. "What is the matter? Is anything wrong?" she asked.

"No—nothing in the least wrong, far from it, indeed; but, oh, my child!"

"Mother, dear, what is it?"

"Something so extraordinary, so wonderful—I mean as a coincidence—that I can hardly speak. I suppose I can't be dreaming. You are really talking to me in the garden, aren't you?"

"I am, and I wish you were telling me the mystery. Do, dear. You look awake, only rather odd."

"It would be strange if I didn't look odd. Dai says—Dai says—"

"What has he been doing—getting engaged?"

"No. It is—your emperor, not Dai, who talks of being engaged."

"Oh," said Virginia, trying not to speak blankly, trying not to flush, trying not to show in any way the sudden sick pain in her heart.

Of course she was not in love with him. Of course, though she had been childish enough long ago to make him her ideal and foolishly faithful enough to keep him so, she had always known that he would never be more to her than a shadow emperor. Some day he would marry one of those other royal girls who were so much more suitable than she. That would be natural and right, as she had more than once told herself with no conscious pang, but now that the news had come, now that the royal girl was actually chosen and the must bear the letter and read about the happy event in the newspapers, it was different. She felt suddenly cold and sick under the blow—hurt and defrauded and even jealous. She knew that she would hate the girl—some wretched, commonplace girl, with stick on teeth, perhaps, or no figure and no idea of the way to wear her clothes or do her hair.

But she swallowed hard and clinched her fingers under the voluminous letter about Dandy Dimont. "Oh, so our friend is going to be married?" she remarked lightly.

"That depends," replied the grand duchess, laughing mysteriously, with a catch in her voice as if she had been a nervous girl—"that depends. You must guess. But, no, I won't tease you. My dear, my dear, after Dai's letter, coming as it has come, in the midst of such a conversation, I shall be a firm believer in telepathy. This letter on its way to us must have put the thoughts into our minds and the words on our tongues. It may be that the emperor of Rhaetia will marry; it may not, for my sweet, beautiful girl, it depends upon you."

"Me?" The voice did not sound to Virginia like her own. Was she, too, dreaming? Were they both in a dream?

"He wishes to marry you."

All the letters dropped from Virginia's lap—dropped and fluttered to the grass slowly, like falling rose leaves. Scarcely knowing what she did, she clasped her hands over the young bosom, shaken with the sudden throbbing of her heart. Perhaps such a betrayal of feeling by a royal maiden decorously used (by proxy) for her hand was scarcely correct, but Virginia had no thought for rules of conduct as laid down for her too often by her mother.

To be continued.

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C. G. Senden Dead.

Carl G. Senden, well-known to Slater business men and who owns property in the business section of Main St., died Monday at the Jewish Hospital in St. Louis of liver complaint. He had been in the hospital several weeks. Mr. Senden was 49 years and is survived by a mother, a sister and four brothers.

The funeral was held privately from the residence of his sister Tuesday afternoon.—Slater News.

Mr. Wm. H. Anderson, M. D., of Soda Springs, Ida., says that Bee's Laxative Cough Syrup has relieved coughs and colds under all other remedies failed. Its gentle laxative effects especially recommend it for children. It is pleasant to take. For coughs, colds, hoarseness whooping-cough. Money refunded if not satisfied. Sold by P. H. Franklin

Born—To John VanBoovan and wife Sunday, March 22, a girl—A house which is situated near the railroad was destroyed by fire last Thursday. It is said that Wm. Spence distinguished himself by climbing up a ladder and saving a little 'coon'.—Slater News.

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G. W. Tandy, of Jacksonville, Ill., arrived Tuesday afternoon to visit his nephews, C. W., E. J. and G. W. Litter, and niece, Mrs. Mattie Lillard.

Ernest Borchers, a former citizen of this community but now living at Lees City, Kansas, is the guest of his brother, Henry. Mr. and Mrs. O. P. Sturm, of Oklahoma City arrived Saturday night to visit her mother, Mrs. Mattie Lillard. He left Sunday afternoon. She remained until Wednesday afternoon. Both are looking well.—Harry G. Hering came in from Daway, Okla., Friday evening and is packing his household goods to move his family there. He, wife and children spent Sunday in Slater with his sister, Mrs. F. C. Neale.—Blackburn Record

Mr. Uorub, of the New York Racket Store, was here Tuesday the guest of G. M. Cheatham and family. While here Mr. Uorub purchased Banker Swiney's fine surry horse for \$225. Mr. Swiney purchased the horse of Mr. J. B. Deimer for \$250.—Banker Swiney came very near losing his fine residence on Capital Hill last Saturday morning. At about 1 o'clock his wife awakened and found the house full of smoke. In a second she had Mr. Swiney out of bed, and he found the wood box in the kitchen in full blaze. A mouse had gotten hold of a match and lit it.—Graham Globe.

Mrs. Nannie Winburn, nee Miss Nannie Boyd, died at the home of T. J. Burton Wednesday and was buried here yesterday.—Died—Miss Ethel Coward died of consumption at the home of her father in Kansas City, Monday March 23, 1908. Her remains were brought here and interred in the cemetery at Concord. Those who came with the remains were her father, Doc Cowan and daughters, Mary and Maude, Will Cowan and family and Misses Mamie Weiser and Maude Bowman and Geo. Hardin—Arrow Rock Statesman.

Genuine Gold Mine.

A meeting of the Stockholders of the Old Missouri Gold Mining Co., was held at the City Hall Monday the 23rd to hear a report on the progress of the development work from J. J. Smith, secretary and general manager, who recently returned from the mines at Searchlight, Nevada. With but two exceptions all of the stock in this company is owned in Sweet Springs and vicinity, and the officers and Board of Directors are J. F. Evans, pres.; R. Sam Hays, vice pres.; M. D. Jackson, Treas.; J. J. Smith, Sec. and Gen. Manager; J. F. Coulter, John Hicklin and H. Reinken, directors. The property consists of ten claims located near Searchlight, Nevada. Messrs. Smith and Jackson have been sinking a shaft on one of the claims since last November. It is now 85 feet deep, 50 feet of which shows an average assay of \$20 gold per ton. Within the past 30 days good values have been discovered on another of their claims, panings from which show a good strip of gold.

The stockholders are well pleased with the prospects thus far and ample funds were provided at the meeting to put in some necessary machinery and continue the development.

Mr. Smith will return to Nevada about the middle of April and push the work.—Sweet Springs Herald.

The case of Fritz Lange against the Mo. Pacific R. Co. has finally been settled. This case has been in the courts for five years. The little girl whose leg was cut off by the cars, will receive \$5,000 with interest at 6 per cent from date of first trial, but by agreement half of this goes to the lawyers.—Sweet Springs Herald.

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